

Achieving Positive Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy



June 2026

Policy Statement

At Abercromby Nursery School, we believe that behaviour is a form of communication and that every child deserves to be understood, supported, and guided with care. Our approach to behaviour is rooted in relationships, inclusion, and high expectations for every child. We work in partnership with families and external agencies to ensure that all children feel safe, valued, and able to thrive.

We are committed to creating a nurturing, structured, and joyful environment where children develop confidence, empathy, and responsibility, learning how their actions affect themselves and others.

Our School Values:

All friends at Abercromby
Believe in yourself
Everybody is important
Rules to keep us safe and happy
Children help to choose
Reach out to all
Our choices matter
Make a difference
Be kind and helpful
Your voice counts

School Motto:

From little seeds, great trees grow

Aims of the Policy

- Support children's emotional and behavioural development through co-regulation, leading to self-regulation.
- Create a safe, calm, and inclusive environment.
- Promote positive relationships.
- Embed EYFS principles.
- Help children understand that choices have consequences and they can repair harm.
- Celebrate success, effort, and positive behaviour.

Guidance Policy for Behaviour

At Abercromby nursery school, we believe that every member of our school community should have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential, regardless of race, colour, gender, disability, special educational needs, or socio-economic background.

We believe that all our pupils have the right to be educated in an environment free from disruption by others.

This policy sets out the framework for the behaviour, responsibilities, values, and attitudes expected of our community members within a Restorative Practices (RP) philosophy. Our aim is to support the nursery school community in repairing and strengthening relationships through a nurturing approach, helping children develop strategies to manage conflict positively and build essential life skills.

The school embraces the principles of Restorative Practices as a means of empowering Teachers and Nursery Officers to be effective practitioners within the nursery setting, raising standards and achievement across the school, and fostering aspirational, motivated, and responsible children.

Aims of the Policy

At Abercromby nursery school, we are committed to fostering a nurturing, inclusive, and structured environment where all children feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed. Our core values shape our approach to learning, behaviour, and personal development:

- Support emotional and behavioural development – Provide co-regulation as a pathway to self-regulation, equipping children with the skills to communicate effectively and manage their emotions.
- Promote a consistent, evidence-based approach – Establish clear school rules, conflict resolution strategies, and Restorative Practice principles, applied consistently with nurturing care, high expectations, and strong support.
- Create a welcoming and inspiring school community – Develop an environment where children eagerly attend, feel a sense of belonging, and cultivate a lifelong love for learning.
- Embed core principles of early education – Ensure that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) principles of “A Unique Child” and “Positive Relationships” are central to all aspects of school life.
- Foster a positive learning environment – Ensure a structured and orderly setting, both indoors and outdoors, where children can work, play, and learn effectively.
- Recognise and reward achievement – Celebrate children’s personal successes and positive behaviour to build confidence, motivation, and resilience.

Behaviour & The Roots of Distressed Behaviour

Behaviour is a form of communication. It reflects how a child feels, their experiences, and their ability to cope with emotions. There are many reasons why children may struggle with relationships, following rules, adapting to the school environment, and regulating their emotions

These may include:

- Children still learning essential social and emotional skills.
- Children who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- Children affected by toxic stress.
- Children who have experienced disrupted attachment.
- Neurodiverse children who may process the world differently.
- Children going through difficulties at home.
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
- Children simply having a tough day.

Whatever the cause of distressed behaviour, it is our responsibility to provide repair and healing through positive relationships, working hand in hand with families and external agencies to support children in developing the skills they need to thrive in school.

As practitioners, we will always intervene in situations that endanger a child, others, or cause damage to equipment or property.

In our nursery school, we recognise that very young children are still developing the ability to regulate their emotions and express their needs appropriately. Behaviours such as biting, scratching, shouting, and tantrums are often a result of frustration, sensory needs, or limited communication skills.

Our approach focuses on age-appropriate responses, including gentle redirection, clear and consistent boundaries, co-regulation, and modelling positive behaviours. We support children by helping them understand their emotions, providing alternative ways to express themselves, and using calming techniques tailored to their developmental stage. Through nurturing relationships and structured guidance, we aim to equip children with the skills they need to manage their feelings and interactions positively.

Behaviours Considered Unacceptable

- Physical abuse, including hitting, punching, pinching, kicking, and pushing.
- Verbal abuse, including racist or sexist remarks and name-calling.
- Bullying, defined as persistent name-calling, minor harassment (such as taking another child's belongings or toys), or more serious incidents involving physical violence or a group targeting an individual child.
- Spitting.
- Screaming, shouting, and unruly running inside the nursery building.
- Destructive or improper use of toys, equipment or materials.

Supporting Positive Behaviour

Staff are committed to building positive teacher-pupil relationships, which are key to working effectively with all children, especially those with emotional or behavioural challenges.

Children may exhibit difficulties in different ways, such as:

- Withdrawal, leading to difficulty making friends.
- Inability to concentrate or settle into activities.
- Disruptive, uncooperative, or aggressive behaviour.

Where possible, we investigate the causes of these difficulties and implement appropriate strategies to build relationships and support children. Close collaboration exists between the nursery and external agencies that may assist both the school and parents/carers. Initially, staff will discuss any concerns about a child's behaviour with parents/carers to ensure consistent strategies are used at home and in school to support the child's development.

Restorative Practices Philosophy Statement

Effective Restorative Practices foster awareness of how others are affected by inappropriate behaviour. This is achieved by actively engaging participants in a process that separates the deed from the doer, rejecting the act but not the actor, and allowing participants to make amends for the harm caused. Restorative Practices acknowledge the intrinsic worth of each person and their potential contribution to the school community.

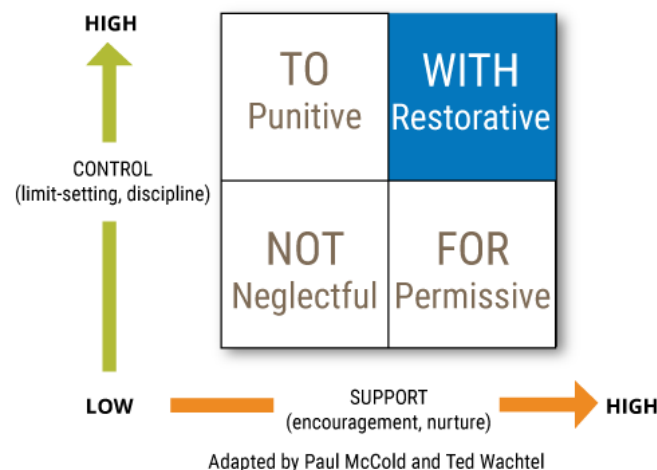
The Restorative Practices framework will:

- Improve behaviour and attitudes.
- Provide explicit tools within a structured framework to challenge unacceptable behaviour, resolve conflict, and repair harm.
- Enhance relationships by establishing rights, accountabilities, and responsibilities within the community.
- Offer a safe, philosophical foundation for staff, pupils, and parents to share ideas and discuss issues.

We will adopt the four key elements of Restorative Practices, which are:

- Social Discipline Window
- Fair Process
- Restorative Questions
- Free Expression of Emotions

Social Discipline Window



Wherever possible we should try to work in the 'with box', offering high support, nurturing and encouragement in conjunction with consistently setting clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour. Staff should always, within their professional conduct, be positive and respectful role models to their pupils.

The three principles of Fair Process

1. Engagement – involving all participants in the process.
2. Explanation – shared understanding.
3. Expectation Clarity – clear vision for the future.

Restorative Questions - To respond to challenging behaviour

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

To help those harmed by others actions:

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Restorative Practices Continuum

At our nursery school, we believe in working with people rather than doing things to or for them. Wherever possible, we use fair processes, ensuring that our responses to challenging behaviour focus on building relationships and repairing harm. Our aim is for the entire school community to embrace and follow this framework, recognising that separating the deed from the doer and the act from the actor is integral to the Restorative Practice philosophy. It is also essential that staff address situations proactively, fostering positive relationships with children to promote trust, understanding, and emotional growth.

Working with Families

At Abercromby nursery school, we aim to approach both positive and challenging behaviours consistently and appropriately. Our support extends beyond the child to include families, ensuring a holistic approach that identifies underlying causes of behaviour. We maintain open communication with parents and, when necessary, refer families to external agencies for additional support. If a child's behaviour suggests an underlying difficulty, further assessment and assistance may be sought via our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

In attending our nursery and entrusting their children to our care, caregivers should:

- Be open to discussing any concerns around regulation with nursery staff, accepting calls and meetings from the school when possible.
- Engage with nursery staff and support proposed interventions to improve and support positive regulation.
- Be actively engaged in repairs when necessary, modelling how to repair harm when it has occurred e.g., making something with your child to recognise harm that has been caused.
- Raise any questions or concerns about regulation with the nursery directly and modelling our model of peaceful and respectful, restorative problem solving.

Home-School Partnership

A strong home-school relationship enhances children's learning, development, and emotional well-being. We work closely with parents to support their child's progress, ensuring a consistent approach between home and school. Parents play a vital role by:

- Taking an active interest in their child's learning.
- Supporting school rules, procedures, and conflict resolution strategies.
- Engaging in school activities and events.

To help children be ready for the school day, parents can:

- Ensure punctuality and encourage focus.
- Maintain open communication with staff.
- Support their child's emotional and behavioural development.

Each child's key person regularly updates parents on their behaviour and collaborates to address any recurring concerns. Using observation records, we work together to understand the underlying causes of behaviour and decide on appropriate, supportive responses. Effective communication between parents and staff is essential and includes:

- Reading and responding to school correspondence.
- Making appointments to discuss concerns when needed.
- Providing up-to-date emergency contact details.

- Attending Meet the Teacher Day and any additional school meetings.
- Reporting absences by phone on the first day.

By maintaining a strong partnership, we create a supportive and nurturing environment where children feel secure, valued, and ready to learn.

PACEfulness at the Nursery School

At the nursery school, we work within the PACE principles to guide our interactions with children.

PACE is an approach to communication developed by Dr. Daniel Siegel, focusing on:

- Playfulness – maintaining a light and engaging tone.
- Acceptance – accepting the child as they are, even if we do not accept their behaviour.
- Curiosity – wondering about what might be triggering certain behaviours.
- Empathy – feeling compassion and staying with the child through their difficult experiences.

The aim of PACEful communication is to help children develop distress tolerance, teaching them that big emotions are not overwhelming when supported by a trusted adult. When children feel understood and supported, they are better able to regulate their emotions and behaviours.

Natural and Logical Consequences

Once a child is emotionally regulated, we help them reflect on their behaviour and understand its consequences. Natural and logical consequences play a key role in teaching children cause and effect, reinforcing that they are responsible for their actions.

- Natural consequences happen without adult intervention. For example, if a child refuses to wear a coat outside, they will naturally feel cold.
- Logical consequences are directly related to the behaviour. For instance, if a child spills their drink, they help clean it up.

Unlike traditional punishment, which often imposes arbitrary consequences unrelated to the behaviour, our approach ensures consequences are meaningful. We help children understand the impact of their actions, address any unmet needs, and develop skills to support their social and emotional growth.

Strategies for Supporting Children Who Engage in Inconsiderate Behaviour

We require all staff, volunteers, and students to use positive strategies when addressing inconsiderate behaviour, ensuring that children are supported in finding appropriate solutions based on their age and stage of development. These strategies include:

- Acknowledging children's feelings and emotions.
- Providing clear explanations about why certain behaviours are unacceptable.
- Helping children regain control of their emotions so they can develop more appropriate responses.

We ensure the environment is engaging and enriched with natural, open-ended resources, keeping children meaningfully occupied and reducing unnecessary conflict over sharing and turn-taking.

We actively acknowledge and encourage considerate behaviours, such as kindness and cooperation, fostering a culture where children complement and support one another.

We support each child in developing a sense of belonging, ensuring they feel valued and welcome in the group.

We avoid reinforcing inconsiderate behaviour by ensuring that children do not receive attention solely in response to negative actions. Instead, we help them understand the outcomes of their behaviour and teach them alternative coping strategies.

Our Behaviour Guidance Approach

- Children are never excluded from the group through practices such as a 'naughty chair' or 'time out'.
- Corporal punishment (e.g., smacking or shaking) is never used, nor are threats of such actions.
- No child is ever singled out or humiliated as a form of discipline.
- Physical restraint is only used when absolutely necessary to prevent harm to the child, others, or property. Any such incident is recorded and reported to parents on the same day.
- In cases of serious behaviour concerns, such as racial or other discriminatory behaviour, we make it clear that such actions are unacceptable. This is done through age-appropriate explanations, not personal blame.
- We never shout or raise our voices in a threatening manner to manage behaviour.
- Sensory resources are available to help children self-regulate and manage their emotions in a supportive way.

Supporting Children Under Three Years Old

For younger children, our approach is tailored to their developmental stage, recognising that they:

- Are still learning to regulate emotions such as fear, anger, or distress and need sensitive adult guidance.
- May engage in meltdowns, biting, or fighting due to intense emotions. Staff respond with calmness and patience, offering comfort and helping children talk through their feelings.
- May exhibit recurring challenging behaviour due to underlying causes, such as changes at home, separation anxiety, or frequent carer changes. In such cases, we focus on strengthening the child's bond with their key person, ensuring they feel secure and supported.

Rough and Tumble Play & Fantasy Aggression

Young children often engage in rough-and-tumble play or fantasy-based aggression (e.g., superhero or weapon-themed play). While this behaviour can sometimes be inconsiderate, it is not necessarily linked to aggression or bullying.

- We recognise that teasing and rough-and-tumble play are normal and developmentally appropriate, as long as they remain within safe limits.
- We set clear boundaries with children to ensure play remains safe and respectful.
- We embrace fantasy play as an opportunity to explore themes of right and wrong and encourage children to develop empathy and conflict resolution skills.
- We use teachable moments to suggest alternative play strategies, helping children problem-solve and think creatively. We tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

Hurtful Behaviour

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under five will, at some stage, hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially when emotions are heightened. However, it is not helpful

to label this behaviour as 'bullying', as young children's hurtful actions are typically spontaneous and momentary, without full awareness of the impact on others.

Understanding and Supporting Children with Hurtful Behaviour

- Young children may behave in hurtful ways because they have not yet developed the ability to manage overwhelming emotions.
- They lack the biological and cognitive capacity to regulate their emotions independently, so adult support is essential.
- The ability to self-regulate intense emotions, such as anger, develops as neurological systems mature.
- We support children through these emotions, helping both the child who is upset and the child who has caused harm to return to a state of calm. This approach helps the brain develop the necessary systems for future self-regulation.
- Punitive responses are not effective and can be counterproductive. Instead, we focus on calm supportive interventions.
- We offer comfort and reassurance, particularly for pre-verbal children, through gentle holding and cuddling, referred to as a 'helping hug'. For verbal children, we provide reassurance alongside explanations to help them understand their emotions and behaviour.
- We help children recognise and name their feelings, supporting them to verbalise emotions and make connections between experiences and feelings. We often use the phrase 'name it to tame it' to guide these discussions.
- We encourage empathy, helping children understand that their actions affect others. For example, "When you hit Adam, it hurt him and made him cry."
- We support the development of pro-social behaviours, such as conflict resolution and turn taking, offering guidance like, "I see you're feeling better now—how can we help Adam feel better too?"
- We understand that learning social skills takes time, and children require repeated experiences with problem-solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- We model positive social behaviour through play, activities, and storytelling, fostering self-esteem and confidence through secure, nurturing relationships.
- We help children understand the impact of their behaviour, but we do not force apologies. Instead, we encourage genuine apologies when children truly understand and feel remorseful.

Addressing Persistent Hurtful Behaviour

If hurtful behaviour becomes recurrent or excessive, we work closely with parents to identify underlying causes and develop appropriate strategies. Some potential contributing factors include:

- Lack of a secure attachment to a responsive caregiver.
- Inconsistent or ineffective responses from adults, leading to negative behaviour patterns.
- Limited language skills, making it difficult for the child to express emotions verbally.
- Exposure to aggressive behaviour at home, emotional distress, or potential abuse.
- Developmental conditions that may affect emotional regulation and behaviour.

If initial support strategies are ineffective, we follow the Code of Practice, involving specialist services such as OSSME and SENIS where necessary.

Responding to Bullying

If a child is bullying another child, we take the following steps:

- We listen to the child who has been bullied and act on their concerns.
- We intervene immediately to prevent further harm.
- We explain to the child engaging in bullying why their behaviour is unacceptable.

- We reassure and support the child who has been bullied.
- We help the child displaying bullying behaviour understand the impact of their actions.
- We encourage and reinforce considerate behaviour, providing opportunities for positive social interactions.
- We do not label children as 'bullies', recognising that their behaviour may stem from their own experiences of bullying, emotional distress, or trauma.
- We understand that children who bully often struggle with empathy, so we do not insist on forced apologies unless they are genuine.
- We discuss the behaviour with the parents of both the child who has bullied and the child who has been affected, ensuring collaborative support strategies are in place.

By providing guidance, support, and a nurturing environment, we help all children develop healthy social skills, emotional regulation, and positive relationships.

At our nursery, we are committed to fostering a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where all children feel valued and supported. By using PACEful communication, modelling positive social behaviours, and responding to inconsiderate or hurtful actions with empathy and guidance, we help children develop the emotional and social skills they need to thrive. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and, through consistent support, collaboration with parents, and tailored interventions, we empower children to understand their emotions, build resilience, and form respectful relationships. Our approach ensures that every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and develop into a confident and compassionate individual.

At Abercromby Nursery School, we believe that everybody is important, every voice matters, and every child can make a difference.